

February 28, 2021

Second Sunday in Lent

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE: *Wondrous Love (David Johnson)*

WELCOME

MEDITATION

A Parable of The Fig Tree

In Luke's gospel, Jesus tells a story of a fruitless fig tree once planted with promise, only to grow barren and brittle. The landowner in the parable has returned to its empty branches for three years. With patience worn thin and hope withered, he commands the gardener to cut it down, seeing it as a liability to the soil.

But where the landowner sees waste, the gardener perceives possibility that lies fallow. The gardener has learned from the land that life flows in cycles—budding, flourishing, pruning, death. And so he requests one more year. Cutting the earth with a shovel, he loosens the clots that have settled like stone so that when water comes, the earth will receive it like a soft kiss. He blankets the roots with manure so that growth can be steadied by hope. And then he lets go.



"WHERE THE FRUIT LIES"

by lisle gwynn garrity

What happens to the fig tree? Does it live? Does it die? Does it bear any fruit?

We don't know. And so, if we can't read the end of this story, then we must write it with our own lives. Because we know what it feels like to be the fig tree, to be deemed worthless, to be weary enough to believe that we don't deserve to be well. And perhaps we also know what it's like to see the world through the eyes of the landowner—calculating worth based on what we produce, what we accomplish, what we provide.

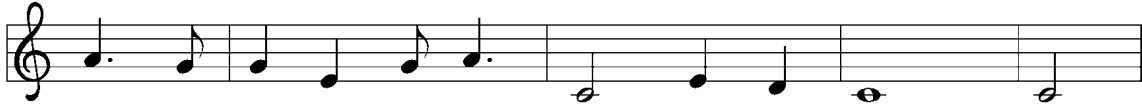
Can we cultivate the vision of the Great Gardener, the One who sees you for what you are becoming? The one who tends and prunes, nourishes and lets go?

Perhaps for us, the fruit is not the ending. The fruit is in the waiting, in the dead of winter, in the manure; the nurture, the rest, the darkness. The fruit is in all of it, sowing seeds we can't yet see.

GATHERING SONG: *Give Me Jesus (ELW 770)*



1 In the morn-ing when I rise, in the morn-ing when I rise,
2 Dark . . . mid-night was my cry, dark . . . mid-night was my cry,
3 Just a - bout the break of day, just a - bout the break of day,
4 Oh, . . . when I come to die, oh, . . . when I come to die,
5 And . . . when I want to sing, and . . . when I want to sing,



in the morn - ing when I rise, give me Je - sus.
dark . . . mid - night was my cry, give me Je - sus.
just a - bout the break of day, give me Je - sus.
oh, . . . when I come to die, give me Je - sus.
and . . . when I want to sing, give me Je - sus.

Refrain



Give me Je - sus, give me Je - sus.



You may have all the rest, give me Je - sus.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: GIVE ME JESUS, African American spiritual

GREETING/ PRAYER OF THE DAY - *Kristin Smith*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: *As the Sun with Longer Journey (ELW 329)*



1 As the sun with long - er jour - ney melts the win - ter's snow and ice,
2 Through the days of wait - ing, watch - ing, in the des - ert of our sin,
3 Praise be giv - en to the mak - er of the sea - sons' year - ly round:



with its slow - ly grow - ing ra - diance warms the seed be - neath the earth,
search - ing on the far ho - ri - zon for a sign of cloud or wind,
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it— Source, Sus - tain - er, Lord of life,



may the sun of Christ's up - ris - ing gent - ly bring our hearts to life.
we a - wait the heal - ing wa - ters of our Sav - ior's vic - to - ry.
as the ev - er turn - ing a - ges roll to their e - ter - nal rest.

Text: John Patrick Earls, OSB, b. 1935
Music: NAGEL, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
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WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

GOSPEL: LUKE 13:1-9, 31-35 - *Jeff Kosman*

¹At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this

fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' ⁸He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³²He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.'

³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Word of God.

Word of life.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD:

CHILDREN'S SERMON: *Roger Steinke*

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *There Is a Balm in Gilead* (ELW 614)

Refrain



There is a balm in Gil-e - ad to make the wound-ed whole;



there is a balm in Gil-e - ad to heal the sin - sick soul.



- 1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged and think my work's in vain,
- 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,
- 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

Refrain



but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BALM IN GILEAD, African American spiritual

THE APOSTLES' CREED - *Ginny Conricode*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION - *Stephanie and Jeff Almeida*

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

Your gift of grace is for all people. Give confident faith to all the baptized, that they may follow you wholeheartedly. Give new believers joy in your promises; give hope and courage to those who suffer for their faith. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All the ends of the earth worship you. From galaxies to microorganisms, preserve your creation. Teach humanity to wonder at your works and to join you in tending to creation's well-being. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Jesus you joined humanity in suffering and death. Reveal to all the depth of your love shown on the cross. Accompany all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Restore all who are sick or grieving. Bring vindication for victims of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You made Abraham and Sarah the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Bless grandparents, parents, and foster parents, and the children who look to them for care and guidance. Console those who deal with infertility, parents who have entrusted their children to adoption, and children longing to be adopted. Equip ministries and services to families. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Silence for self-reflection.

Fountain of living water,
pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ✝ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING: A Song of Unity (W&P 1)

As a moth - er hen gath - ers her chicks, as an ea - gle
lifts up her young, you have called to your ta - ble all
peo - ple as one; God, we thank you for your pres - ence here. *Fine*
As we share in the bread and the wine, come to us, ho - ly
Je - sus, in love. Let the gift of your sac - ri - fice
o - pen our eyes; we are one in your bo - dy and blood. *D.C. al fine*

Text: David M. Jahn
Music: A SONG OF UNITY, David M. Jahn

OFFERING PRAYER - Nikki Thorsheim

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide, together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we bless and magnify you. You led your people Israel through the desert, and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all the baptized gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER - *Karen Thomas*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus draws the whole world to himself. Come to this meal and be fed.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you **+** that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: *Abide, O Dearest Jesus (ELW 539)*



- 1 A - bide, O dear - est Je - sus, a - mong us with your grace,
- 2 A - bide, O dear Re - deem - er, a - mong us with your word
- 3 A - bide with heav'n-ly bright - ness a - mong us, pre - cious Light;
- 4 A - bide with rich - est bless - ings a - mong us, boun - teous Lord;
- 5 A - bide, O faith - ful Sav - ior, a - mong us with your love;



that e - vil may not harm us nor we to sin give place.
and thus now and here - af - ter true peace and joy af - ford.
your truth di - rect and keep us from er - ror's gloom - y night.
let us in grace and wis - dom grow dai - ly through your word.
grant stead - fast - ness and help us to reach our home a - bove.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Rondo (Anonymous)*

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